

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

The paragraph beginning on page 13, line 12, bridging page 14, line 7 has been amended as follows:

Then the fiber mat 14 is obtained in the preparing process of a mat by aggregating the kenaf fibers 1 obtained in the aforementioned fiberizing process. Fig. 2(b) shows one example of the fiberizing process wherein the kenaf fibers 1 are distributed on the conveyor net 15 from a nozzle 13 for distributing fibers in order to pile up the ~~kanaf~~ kenaf fibers 1 on said conveyor net 15 in a desired thickness to form an aggregate of the ~~kanaf~~ kenaf fibers 1, and the fiber mat 14 can be obtained by carrying out a needle- punching of said aggregate wherein needles 16 are thrust into the upper and lower sides of the aggregate on the conveyor net 15 in order to interlock the kenaf fibers 1. In such a case, the fiber mat 14 can be prepared by distributing the kenaf fibers 1 on the conveyor net 15 to pile up the kenaf fibers in a random orientation. Although the fiber directions of the kenaf fibers 1 are randomly orientated as regards only X and Y directions in the above case where the kenaf fibers 1 are merely piled up, the fiber directions can somewhat be randomized in Z direction by compressing

the aggregate in length direction (thickness direction and vertical direction) after the kenaf fibers 1 are piled up, and it is possible to increase the properties of the obtained fiber board in connection with the thickness direction.

The paragraph on page 22, lines 4-26 has been amended as follows:

According to the present invention, the adjusting process of moisture content of the bast portion may be added between the ~~separating~~ separating process of the bast portion and fiberizing process, and the moisture content of the bast portion separated from the stem core portion of kenaf in the separating process of the bast portion may be adjusted to 10 - 40 percent by weight. If the bast portion is a low-grade material containing a part near the root and a skin, the kenaf fibers 1 are damaged to form short fibers when the bast portion is defibrated to form the kenaf fibers 1 in the fiberizing process, and the fiber mat having an excellent quality cannot be obtained. Accordingly, the moisture content of the bast portion is adjusted to 10 - 40 percent by weight by adding water or hot water to the bast portion in the adjusting process of the moisture content of the bast portion. By adjusting the moisture content of the bast portion to 10 - 40 percent by weight,

the bast portion can smoothly be defibrated without damaging the kenaf fibers 1 even if said bast portion is the low-grade material containing the part near the root and the skin, and ~~kenaf~~ kenaf fibers having a prescribed fiber length can be obtained, and it is possible to produce fiber mat having an excellent quality.